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handwritten letter from George Barker of the University of Pennsylvania to John Stockwell, first professor of math and astronomy at Case School of Applied Sciences

March 22, 1881
3909 Locust St.
Philadelphia Mch 22d

My dear Mr. Stockwell:

I have received your letters of the 10th and the 21st insts. and should have acknowledged their receipt before had I not been very busy. I mailed at once the enclosure to Mr. Michelson and also cabled him to the effect that the intentions of the Cleveland people were good. I have also mailed him your letter to me received today.

I can appreciate his position. He is now deriving his support from the Navy. He cannot afford to resign from that position until he has a positive certainty to fall back on. While it may be very true that the Trustees of the Case School are favorably disposed toward him, that favorable disposition would not in my opinion warrant his resigning from the Navy. If he does not do this however he will be sent to sea.

The chance to secure him for the Case school I regard as one not to be trifled with. He doesn't ask any salary and will expect to wait until such time as may be necessary before beginning his duties. But he asks (and I think rightly) that he be elected something even Instructor in Physics as you and Dr. Taylor are if not a full Professor right away, with the understanding that he is not to go on duty until wanted. I can see no reason why some such guarantee cannot be given him. One on which he can have the courage to resign from the Navy and spend another year or more in Europe in special study. Then he can select – and bring home his apparatus and be ready to go at once to work. I have not heard a word from him since I wrote to you. So I say all this on my own responsibility.

With best wishes, Cordially yours,
George F. Barker